

CRIME
AND
PUNISHMENT



FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY

A NEW TRANSLATION BY

MICHAEL R. KATZ

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INTRODUCTION

The decade of the 1860s was one of the most turbulent in Russian history. Russia's ignominious defeat in the Crimean War had exposed the deficiencies of the autocracy; the accession of Alexander II to the throne in 1855 promised significant changes. His reign is known as "the era of great reforms." Organs for local self-government (*zemstvos*) were established to deal with local economic needs; judicial reforms were instituted to promote the speedy and equitable administration of justice; and military reforms were enacted to modernize the Russian army. The greatest and best known of Alexander's "great reforms" was, of course, the long-awaited emancipation of the serfs in 1861 (two years before Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation freeing the slaves).

Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* was first published in the literary journal the *Russian Messenger* in twelve monthly installments during 1866, in the middle of this turbulent decade. The novel reflects the social upheaval and the major changes in Russian society after centuries of serfdom. With growing migration to the cities, poverty became a constant hardship for new urban dwellers. There was an increase in violence as a result of difficult economic conditions. The murder rate rose, and the Russian press reported on horrendous crimes in graphic detail. Drunkenness, prostitution, disease, unemployment, family breakups, and abandoned children all came to typify the nature of Russian reality in the 1860s.

A new generation of young people advanced a variety of radical new ideas. The liberal “men of the ’40s” were gradually replaced by the radical “men of the ’60s.” Ivan Turgenev’s novel *Fathers and Children* (1862) popularized the figure of the “nihilist” (a person who rejects all established religious and moral principles) in his hero Bazarov. Nikolai Chernyshevsky, in his controversial work *What Is to Be Done?* (1863), developed a theory of rational egoism based on the ideas of English utilitarians and French utopian socialists. Active polemics between the older generation and the “new people” were carried on in the press. Dostoevsky was strongly opposed to these radical new ideas and challenged them in considerable depth in his journalistic writings and in his fiction.



Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky was born in 1821 at St. Mary’s Hospital for the Moscow poor, where his father served on the staff after a career in the Russian army medical service. His grandfather had been a Uniate priest, and the family claimed to have descended from seventeenth-century nobility. Dostoevsky’s mother was the daughter of Moscow merchants.

From 1837 to 1843, the young man attended the Military Engineering School in St. Petersburg, followed by a brief period of government service. In 1839, while still at school, Dostoevsky learned that his father had been murdered by peasants on the small estate he had recently purchased just south of Moscow. The exact circumstances were unclear, but the event made an enormous impression on the young man and was reflected in his later writing.

During this time, Dostoevsky read widely in Russian and Western literatures. Among Russian writers, he read the works of Karamzin, Pushkin, and Lermontov. He especially admired Gogol, whose intensely imaginative writings emphasized the plight of the downtrodden “little people” of the capital. Among European authors, Dostoevsky read Homer, Shakespeare, the French dramatists, Diderot, Voltaire, Hugo, Zola, Balzac, Goethe,

Schiller, and Dickens. In 1844, Dostoevsky resigned his position in the service and decided to try his luck in the literary world of St. Petersburg. His first endeavor was a translation of Balzac's *Eugénie Grandet*, a novel focused on greed, money, love, obsession, and self-sacrifice.

Dostoevsky's first original work was an epistolary novel entitled *Poor Folk* (1846) about an impoverished copy clerk who is hopelessly in love with a young woman he can never possess. The preeminent Russian critic Vissarion Belinsky was delighted with the work and proclaimed that a "new Gogol" had arrived on the literary scene. Unfortunately, his second work, published the same year, was much less well received. *The Double*, a psychological tale of fantasy, obsession, and madness, was dismissed by the critics because the author appeared to have abandoned the social and political themes that characterized *Poor Folk*.

Some years earlier, Dostoevsky had begun attending meetings of the Petrashevsky Circle, a literary discussion group in St. Petersburg organized by Mikhail Petrashevsky, a follower of the French utopian socialist Charles Fourier. The members of the circle included writers, teachers, students, minor government officials, and army officers. While differing in their political views, most of them were opponents of the tsarist autocracy and Russian serfdom. At one meeting in 1847, Dostoevsky read aloud Belinsky's forbidden "Letter to Gogol," in which Gogol was pilloried for giving up progressive social themes in favor of religious conservatism. The meeting was interrupted by the police and the participants arrested. Dostoevsky was interrogated, jailed, and condemned to death. He was led out to a parade ground to be shot, but at the last minute a reprieve arrived and he was spared execution in a gesture epitomizing Tsar Nicholas I's cruel flair for melodrama.

Dostoevsky's sentence was commuted to hard labor and he spent the 1850s first in a prison labor camp and then in exile as an army private. He was permitted to return to St. Petersburg some ten years later under the more enlightened reign of Alexander II.

Upon his return, he wrote and published a prison memoir entitled *Notes from the House of the Dead* (1860–62), in which he described his own experience as well as the lives of the variety of prisoners he'd encountered in Siberia. One year after that, he published his *Notes from Underground* (1864), the first part of which was a spirited polemic against Chernyshevsky's rational egoism and utilitarianism as expressed in *What Is to Be Done?* The second part of this deeply probing work, an effort to explain how and why the hero has taken refuge in the underground, reveals the underground man's character in three distinct novelistic episodes. This strange work has been described as a "prologue" to the author's "five-act tragedy"—that is, as an introduction to Dostoevsky's five major novels written between 1866 and 1880: *Crime and Punishment* (1866), *The Idiot* (1868–69), *Devils* (or *Demons* or *The Possessed*, 1871–72), *The Raw Youth* (or *The Adolescent*, 1875), and *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880).



Crime and Punishment (1866) has long been considered the quintessential Russian novel. When it was translated into English in 1886, the critical reaction to it was mixed: on the one hand, it was greeted as a "work of extraordinary excellence, as a novel of a hitherto unknown stirring realism"; on the other hand, the book was condemned as "incoherent and inartistic."^{*}

There is no doubt that *Crime and Punishment* remains the single most widely known Russian novel. In addition to capturing the attention of a large general readership since the time of its appearance, it continues to be included every year in numerous college and university courses, not only on Russian literature, but also on Russian history and culture, and in surveys of the European novel and world literature. The book has also been widely adopted for use in secondary schools. Students of all ages and backgrounds respond with passionate attentiveness to this classic text; its literary, historical, cultural, and spiritual values still speak to them and provoke

vigorous, wide-ranging discussions. The novel is also a popular choice of book clubs, reading groups, and study circles.

In a curious twist of fate for the novel's reputation, when the young "hacker/whistleblower" Edward Snowden was restricted to the transit area of the Moscow airport, his lawyer thoughtfully provided him with appropriate reading material to occupy his time and prepare him for what might turn out to be a longer stay in Russia. To that end, he presented Snowden with works by three Russian writers, including only one novel: Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*.



A translator of Dostoevsky faces many challenges and choices. Modern literary Russian consists of a splendid amalgamation of the spoken dialect of the Eastern Slavs (the so-called Old Russian) and the ancient written language of the Russian Orthodox Church (known as Old Church Slavonic). This linguistic blend has, since the time of Pushkin, provided an exceptionally rich source of images and diction for Russian writers. For example, early in Dostoevsky's novel (part I, chapter 2), his hero, Raskolnikov, stumbles into a tavern and encounters the extravagantly morose figure of Marmeladov, who immediately senses a sympathetic listener and promptly launches into his long, pathetic life story. Taunted by rude remarks from the tavern keeper and some inebriated patrons, Marmeladov concludes with what can only be called a "sermon," in a proclamatory biblical style that weaves quotations from the Gospel into his own speech, and that before our very eyes improbably but effectively transforms him into his own literary version of Christ. Marmeladov goes so far as to impersonate Christ and to speak in what he takes to be His voice. This combination of solemn rhetorical eloquence and grotesque comedy is unparalleled in literature. It introduces the principal religious theme of the work, one that will appear in Raskolnikov's first dream, in all of his epiphanic moments (usually as he wanders around St. Petersburg), and

reach its final form in the frequently misunderstood, much maligned, but clearly indispensable Epilogue to the novel. In this translation, I attempt to express the richness of registers or tones—and thus the extraordinary poignancy—of such decisive moments.

Dostoevsky's characters must be seen as unmistakably distinct individuals—not only the main figures (Raskolnikov, Sonya, Svidrigaylov, and Porfiry Petrovich), but also the secondary ones (Marmeladov, Razumikhin, Dunya, Luzhin, etc.). Each character speaks in his or her own Russian idiolect. It is the translator's task to capture the distinct characteristics of their individual speech. Even the least important figures prove to be altogether unique and engaging; for example, the drunken peasants in Raskolnikov's first dream, though totally illiterate, are made vividly and hilariously present by virtue of the quirkiness of their speech, which is rude, abusive, and riotous.

In addition, this version attempts to convey Dostoevsky's fine and subtle sense of humor. His descriptions and dialogues brim over with wit, irony, and sarcasm. The playful repartee between the hero Raskolnikov and the examining magistrate Porfiry Petrovich provides numerous opportunities for the author to display, and the translator to convey, that cunning humor. However, in order to do so, the translator needs to develop a genuine feel for the subtle tone and a sense of the delicate timing, and also be able to express the author's quick and unexpected shifts in diction.



There are numerous ways to read *Crime and Punishment* and endless riches to be discovered when rereading the book. I would like to call the reader's attention to just a few of these. During the course of the novel, Raskolnikov has a series of disturbing dreams. These episodes are of crucial importance in characterizing the hero, exploring his motives, revealing his conscience, and developing the book's defining themes. From the first dream of the beaten mare in part I to the final dream of the Asian plague in the Epilogue,

Raskolnikov's "subconscious" is sending the hero and the reader important communications, reports from hidden dimensions of his experience that must not be ignored.[†]

I would also like to draw the reader's attention to what I would refer to as the many "-cides" of Dostoevsky. The critic Mikhail Bakhtin reminds us that while Tolstoy writes at length in his fiction about the subject of death, Dostoevsky writes novels about murders. *Crime and Punishment* begins with a double homicide; it contains allegorical suicides ("I killed myself," says Raskolnikov to Sonya, "not the old woman"), as well as an actual suicide and an attempted suicide; one critic even develops the theme of Raskolnikov's displaced, allegorical "matricide" in killing the pawnbroker, as well as his culpability in his own mother's death as described in the Epilogue.[‡]

That Epilogue continues to puzzle many readers. Does it represent a significant departure from the text? Is it merely an artificial way to end the novel and the hero's suffering? Or is it justified by the hero's striving for some ultimate illumination, moving beyond the partial illumination provided by the numerous epiphanic moments he experiences during the course of the action? In the author's *Notebooks* containing plans and drafts of the novel, we find the fascinating hint of an alternative conclusion: "The End of the Novel: Raskolnikov goes to shoot himself."[§] In view of this darker possibility, the reader is free to make up his or her own mind about the meaning of the Epilogue and its appropriateness as the last word in this extraordinary novel.

A work preoccupied with murder and its implications, *Crime and Punishment* is first and foremost a fascinating detective novel—but one in which we know from the very beginning who committed the heinous crime. As one critic wittily observed, the novel is not a "who dunnit?" but rather a "why he dunnit?" On this, the 150th anniversary of the work's publication, it is altogether fitting to present a new translation as an act of celebration. I

offer this version to the reader in the hopes of helping extend the life of this irreplaceable book as far into the future as can be imagined.

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* Helen Muchnic, *Dostoevsky's English Reputation, 1881–1936* (New York: Octagon Books, 1969), 10.

† For a detailed discussion, see my *Dreams and the Unconscious in Nineteenth-Century Russian Fiction* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1984), 95–105.

‡ Edward Wasiolek, “Raskolnikov’s Motives: Love and Murder,” *American Imago* 31 (Fall 1974): 252–69.

§ *The Notebooks for “Crime and Punishment,”* edited and translated by Edward Wasiolek (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 243.

NOTE ON THE TRANSLATION

The edition used for this translation is volume 6 of Dostoevsky's *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridtsati tomakh* (Complete Collected Works in Thirty Volumes) published in Leningrad by Nauka in 1973.

I am indebted to my predecessors and to their versions of *Crime and Punishment*: we all learn from each other, and translation becomes a collaborative enterprise.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to my colleagues and students at Middlebury College: in particular, Professor Stephen Donadio for his unflagging encouragement and wise advice, lecturer emerita Alya Baker for her invaluable help with the original text, Christopher Ross for his excellent editing and proofreading, and Matthew Blake for his numerous questions and suggestions; and to my wife, Mary Dodge, and our daughter, Rebecca Esko, for their continued love and support.

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NAMES OF PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS

Raskólnikov, Rodión Románovich or Románych
(Ródya, Ródenka, Ródka)

Pulkhériya Aleksándrovna—his mother

Avdótya Románovna (Dúnya, Dúnechka)—his sister

Razumíkhin or Vrazumíkhin, Dmítry Prokófich—his friend

Alyóna Ivánovna—the pawnbroker

Lizavéta Ivánovna—her sister

Marmeládov, Semyón Zakhárovich or Zakhárych—former civil servant

Katerína Ivánovna—his wife

Sófiya Semyónovna (Sónya, Sónechka)—his daughter

Three other children: Polína (Pólya, Pólenka, Pólechka)

Lénya (Lída, Lídochka)

Kólya (Kólka)

Svidrigáylov, Arkády Ivánovich—landlord; Dunya's former employer

Márfa Petróvna—his wife

Lúzhin, Pétr Petróvich—Dunya's fiancé

Lebezyátnikov, Andréy Semyónovich or Semyónych—his friend

Porfíry Petróvich—examining magistrate; distant relative of Razumikhin's

Lippevékhsel, Amáliya Ivánovna—Marmeladov's landlady

Zosímov—a doctor

Zamétov, Aleksándr Grigórevich—chief police clerk

Ilyá Petróvich—nicknamed “Pórokh” (gunpowder)—police lieutenant

NOTE ON THE CHARACTERS' NAMES

Raskolnikov *raskól* = schism; *raskólnik* = schismatic or dissenter

Razumikhin *rázum* = reason, good sense

Marmeladov *marmelád* = jam, jelly

Sofiya “wisdom” (Greek)

Luzhin *lúzha* = puddle, pool

Lebezyatnikov *lebezít'* = to fawn, cringe

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PART



I

In the beginning of July, during an extremely hot spell, toward evening, a young man left his tiny room, which he sublet from some tenants who lived in Stolyarnyi Lane, stepped out onto the street, and slowly, as if indecisively, set off towards the Kokushkin Bridge.

He had successfully managed to avoid meeting his landlady on the staircase. His small room, more like a closet than an apartment, was tucked under the roof of a tall five-story building. The landlady of the apartment, who rented him this room and provided both dinner and a servant, lived below in a separate apartment on the same staircase; every time he left to go out, he had to pass the landlady's kitchen door, which was almost always left open onto the landing. Every time the young man passed, he felt a painful and fearful sensation, one that he was ashamed of and that made him wince. He was deeply in debt to the landlady and was afraid to face her.

It wasn't that he was so fearful and cowed; in fact, it was just the opposite; but for some time he had been in an irritable and anxious state, similar to hypochondria. He had become so absorbed in himself and so isolated from others that he was afraid of meeting anyone, not only his landlady. He was crushed by poverty, but even his constrained circumstances had ceased to burden him of late. He had completely stopped handling his own everyday affairs and didn't wish to deal with them. He was not actually afraid of his landlady, no matter what she intended to do to him. But to stop on the staircase, put up with all sorts of nonsense about ordinary rubbish that didn't concern him at all, her constant pestering about

payment, her threats and complaints, and, in the face of it all, to have to dodge her, make excuses, tell lies—no thank you; it was better to slip past somehow, like a cat on a staircase, and steal away unnoticed.

However, this time the fear of meeting his creditor surprised even him as he made his way out to the street.

“What sort of feat am I about to attempt, yet at the same time I’m afraid of such nonsense!” he thought with a strange smile. “Hmm . . . yes . . . everything lies in a man’s hands, and still he lets it slip by, solely out of cowardice . . . that’s an axiom. . . . It would be interesting to know what people fear the most. Most of all they fear taking a new step, uttering a new word of their own. . . . But I’m babbling too much. It’s because I’m not doing anything that I’m babbling. That may be the case: I’m babbling because I’m not doing anything. And it’s in the last month I’ve learned to prattle, lying for days and nights in my corner, thinking about . . . ‘once upon a time. . . .’ Well, why am I going out now? Can I really be capable of doing *that*? Is *that* really serious? No, it’s not serious at all. So, I’m amusing myself for the sake of fantasy: games! Yes, that’s it, games!”

It was stiflingly hot outside; moreover, the stuffiness, the crush of people, lime plaster everywhere, scaffolding, bricks, dust, and that particular summer stench, so familiar to every Petersburg resident lacking the means to rent a summer dacha—all this suddenly and offensively struck the young man’s already distraught nerves. The unbearable stench of cheap taverns, which were particularly numerous in this part of the city, and the drunkards encountered constantly, despite its being a weekday, completed the repulsive and grim scene. For a moment, a feeling of the deepest loathing flashed across the young man’s delicate features. Incidentally, he was remarkably handsome, with splendid dark eyes and dark brown hair; he was taller than average, slender, and well built. But soon he seemed to slip into profound pensiveness, even, it would be more accurate to say, into a state of oblivion. He walked along not noticing his surroundings, not even wanting to take notice of them. From time to time he merely muttered something to himself, from his penchant for monologues, which he immediately acknowledged to

himself. At that moment he himself was aware that at times his thoughts were confused and that he was feeling very weak: it was the second day he'd eaten hardly anything at all.

He was so poorly dressed that someone else, even someone used to seeing such, would be ashamed to appear on the street during the day wearing such ragged clothes. However, the district was one where it was difficult to shock anyone with one's apparel. The proximity of the Haymarket, the abundance of certain establishments, and, primarily, the population of tradesmen and craftsmen, all crowded into these streets and lanes of central Petersburg, sometimes filled the general panorama with such subjects that it would be strange to be surprised at all on meeting another such figure. But so much malicious contempt had already accumulated in the young man's soul that, in spite of all his own sometimes very immature squeamishness, when he was out on the street he was not in the least embarrassed by his tattered clothes. It was another matter altogether when he met some of his acquaintances or former comrades, whom, in general, he didn't much like seeing. . . . However, when one drunkard, who for some unknown reason was being transported somewhere along the street in an enormous cart harnessed to a huge dray horse, suddenly shouted to him, in passing, "Hey, you, you German hatmaker!" and roared as loud as he could, pointing his finger at him—the young man suddenly stopped and violently grabbed his own hat. It was a tall, round top hat bought at Zimmerman's shop, but already worn out, and now of a completely faded reddish-brown color, with many holes and stains, lacking a brim, and leaning to one side at a most unattractive angle. However, it was not shame that seized him but a completely different feeling, more resembling fear.

"I knew it!" he muttered in confusion. "That's exactly what I thought! This is the most disgraceful part! It's just this kind of foolish thing, a really trivial detail that can spoil the whole plan! Yes, a hat that's too noticeable. . . . It's funny-looking, and therefore noticeable. . . . With my tattered clothes I really need a peaked cap, even an old one, flat as a pancake,